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## The Portland Spectator, February 2004

Portland State University. Student Publications Board

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BILL O'REILLY • WAR IN IRAQ • SCHOOL VOUCHERS

The  
**Portland  
Spectator**

FEBRUARY 2004



# The Political Problem of Islam

# MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Portland Spectator is to provide the students, faculty, and staff with the alternative viewpoint to the left-wing mentality forced upon all at Portland State University. The Portland Spectator is concerned with the defense and advancement of the ideals under which our great Republic was founded. Our viewpoint originates from the following principles:

- Individual Liberty
- Limited Government
- Free Market Economy and Free Trade
- The Rule of Law

The Portland Spectator is published by the Portland State University Publication Board; and is staffed solely by volunteer editors and writers. The Portland Spectator is funded through incidental student fees, advertisement revenue, and private donations. Our aim is to show that a conservative philosophy is the proper way to approach issues of common concern. In general the staff of the Portland Spectator share beliefs in the following:

- We believe that the academic environment should become again an open forum, where there is a chance for rational and prudent arguments to be heard. The current environment of political correctness, political fundamentalism and mob mentality stifle genuine political debate.
- We support high academic standards.
- We believe that each student should be judged solely on his/her merits.
- We oppose the special or preferential treatment of any one person or group.
- We believe in an open, fair and small student government.
- We believe that equal treatment yields inequality inherent in our human nature.
- We oppose unequal treatment in order to yield equality, for this violates any principle of justice that can maintain a free and civilized society.
- We oppose the welfare state that either benefits individuals, groups or corporations. The welfare state in the long run creates more poverty, dependency, social and economic decline.
- We believe in Capitalism, and that the sole role of government in economic matters is to provide the institutional arrangements that allow capitalism to flourish.
- We do not hate the rich; we do not idolize the poor.
- We believe in an activist U.S. foreign policy that seeks to promote and establish freedom, political and economic, all around the world.
- We believe, most importantly, in the necessity of patriotic duty consistent with the preservation and advancement of our Republic.

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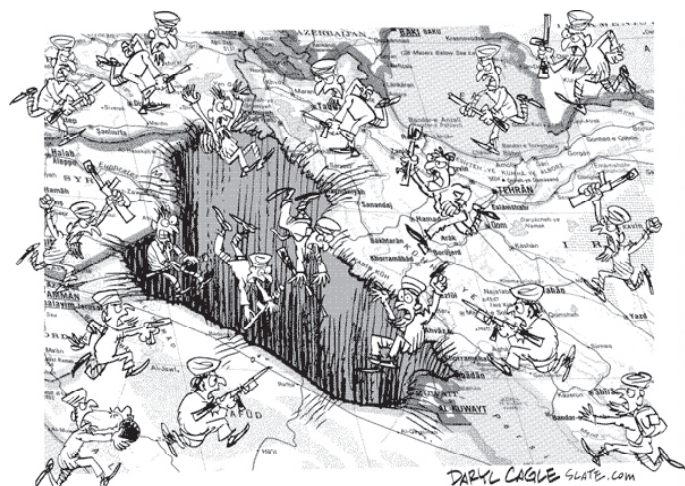
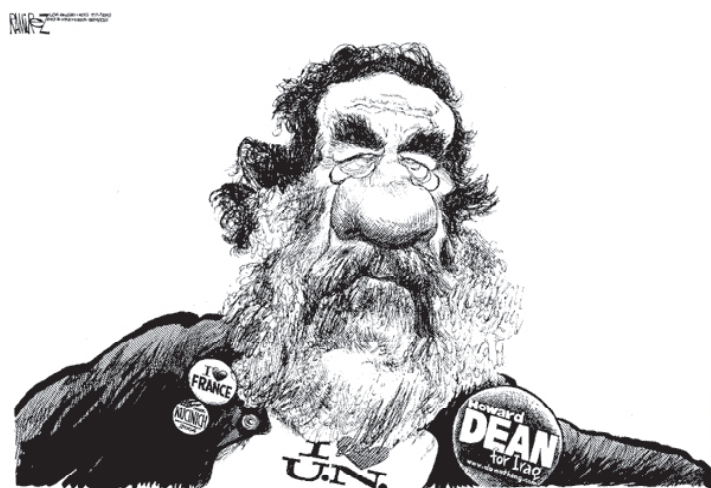
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# PARENTHESIS

## Bush's Budget

The Bush administration released the fiscal year 2005 budget on February 02. Highlighting the budget was increased funding for security and anti-terrorism, and a confirmation of the President's promise to cut the budget in half within five years. In addition, 65 programs are to be eliminated with cuts to an additional 63, saving a total of 4.9 billion dollars. The Education Department alone saves 1.4 billion from the elimination of 38 programs. Maybe we could learn something about trimming fat from a budget here in Oregon.

## Beyond the Call of Duty

The BBC has apologized to Prime Minister Tony Blair following a government inquiry into a story it published concerning the suicide death of Iraqi weapons expert David Kelly, who was identified as the source for a story claiming the Blair had "sexed up" intelligence leading up to the war with Iraq. Two top BBC officials have resigned, while radicals and conspiracy theorists continue to accuse the government of a "whitewash."

## You Gonna Eat That?

A man convicted of killing another man and eating his dismembered body has been sentenced to eight and a half years in prison in Germany. The court rejected a murder charge against Armin Meiwes, which carried a life sentence, as his victim had allegedly agreed to be killed and consumed. No word as to what was eaten for dessert.

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## CLINTON ON WMD'S

"When I left office, there was a substantial amount of biological and chemical material unaccounted for. That is, at the end of the first Gulf War, we knew what he had. We knew what was destroyed in all the inspection processes and that was a lot. And then we bombed with the British for four days in 1998. We might have gotten it all; we might have gotten half of it; we might have gotten none of it. But we didn't know. So I thought it was prudent for the president to go to the U.N. and for the U.N. to say you got to let these inspectors in, and this time if you don't cooperate the penalty could be regime change, not just continued sanctions "

-Bill Clinton, July 22, 2003

## ON GENDER RELATIONS

" [T]he Male Belief System, that compartmentalized, hierarchical, **ejaculatory**, andocentric power structure that is Patriarchy, is fatal to the hearts of men, to empathy and relationship.... That's why V-Day, The White House Project and their many allies are partnering to hold a national women's convention somewhere in the heartland, next June of 2004. Its purpose will be to inspire and mobilize women and **vagina-friendly men** around the 2004 elections and to build a new movement that will coalesce our energies and forces around a politic of caring.... This movement will be a volcano that will erupt in **a flow of soft, hot, empathic, breathing, authentic, vagina-friendly, relational lava** that will encircle patriarchy and smother it. We will be the flood and we'll be Noah's arc. **"V" for Vagina, for vote, for victory.**"

"Hanoi" Jane Fonda

## US INTELLIGENCE INQUIRY

" David Kay's testimony should put to rest any doubts that the Bush administration "sexed up" intelligence or pressured analysts to reach conclusions to fit any political agenda. Kay is unequivocal on this point, saying "never — not in a single case — was the explanation, 'I was pressured to do this.'" Still, dreams die hard among the Bush haters. Instead of overt pressure, the Left is now arguing that the personal visits by Vice President Dick Cheney and his chief of staff Scooter Libby subliminally intimidated the intelligence community into telling the vice president what he wanted to hear. The critics might have a point if the Bush administration had made a case on Iraq that was substantially different from its predecessors. But it was nearly identical. In fact, in some ways the Clinton administration was even more alarmist on the issue than this one has been."

- Representative J.D. Hayworth - Arizona



## Drink Up, Calm Down

Rowdy bars in Portland may soon have more to worry about than broken bar stools and vomit on the bathroom floor. On February 11th, The Portland City Council is expected to vote on the "Time, Place, and Manner" ordinance. Under the ordinance, if a business serving alcohol generates three or more complaints within a month, it could be subject to restrictions on its hours of operation, and may potentially have its liquor license revoked.

## Sympathy for the Devil

Three convicted sex offenders have been released from detention by a federal judge in Portland. The men were being held while awaiting deportation under the Operation Predator initiative aimed at immigrant sex offenders, which was launched nationwide in July 2003. Opponents of the operation say it "goes contrary to our whole system of justice."

## Calling all Republicans

Democrats hold all of Oregon's top six political offices. With three of them up for re-election this year, Secretary of State, state treasurer and attorney general, a Republican candidate has yet to emerge to challenge any of them. Given how our state is run, and that we are a swing state for President Bush, a strong Republican presence in the state legislature, as well as a strong Republican turnout is needed in November. Where are they?

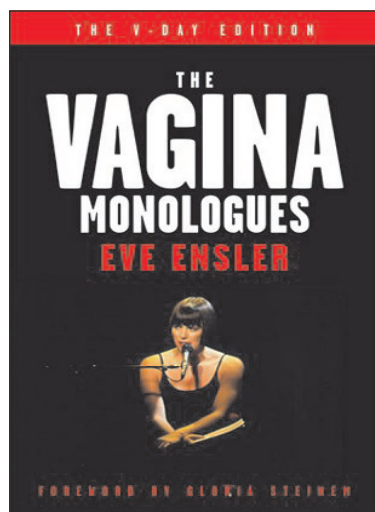
# Campus Update

## STUDENT GOVERNMENT

ASPSU elections are approaching this March and like last year, student government has descended into an irrelevant circus. Commandeered by radicals, the Senate has effectively ceased to matter to anyone but special interest groups and has no tangible accomplishments under its belt. The executive branch has established itself as a weak and indecisive power content to work only on directives handed down by its apparent conductor: the Oregon Student Association. And the judicial branch has failed to establish order, choosing instead to only exacerbate the problems that already exist. This year's "Activist Judge" award goes to Matt "Madman" Wallace for his shameless, unethical, blind devotion to his political motivations above all else. The only positive thing to come out of student government this year has been the Student Fee Committee. Aside from their hard work and long hours, this body has served students by protecting their pocketbooks from greedy special interest groups who feel entitled to student money.

## SERIOUSLY, WHERE'S OUR MONEY?

It appears that the Financial Aid Office has succeeded in a landmark scientific breakthrough. They have developed a device that can actually slow down time. Unfortunately, it seems that the device has malfunctioned somewhere in their office and no one can find it. It has proved to be quite the nuisance as what was supposed to take a few weeks is now taking months, sometimes exceeding entire terms. While we are excited about this new breakthrough, we would also like our financial aid. Sure, government programs are slow, bloated and inefficient, but this is ridiculous.



## THE "V" IS FOR VULGARITY

"The Vagina Monologues" is back this month with its dry, monochrome portrayal of human nature. Having lost its shock value some time ago, "The Vagina Monologues" now relies on an almost exclusive appeal to vulgarity. It's not so much a political statement as it is a display of crude, tasteless, ill-mannered performance art. With every skit as vulgar as the next, "The Vagina Monologues" is ultimately predictable, lacking real humanity in the area it claims to value so highly. Above all else, "The Vagina Monologues" lacks honesty.

# EDITORIAL

## ENRONizing OSPIRG part 3

OSPIRG has been zero-funded as they continue to insist on their right to approximately \$123,000 in student fees for a second time. They will probably end up getting the \$21,000 they received last year upon appeal. In the course of their massive campaign to regain their previous funding level however, a few things have become clear. First: OSPIRG is not honest with students. Second: they have no shame. The issue has always been regarding whether or not PSU student fees should be funding statewide organizations when the vast majority of that money leaves campus. This however, was a nonexistent issue as OSPIRG campaigned last spring for their "referendum" with slogans like "vote yes to help the hungry and homeless" and "help save the environment."

Even earlier this year in gathering 3,000 signatures OSPIRG was not honest with students. They claimed that they had been de-funded and unfairly targeted, (both of which are untrue) and made no mention of the fact that they were asking for \$123,000 in student fees, had already received \$21,000, how that money was spent, or why their funding practices were questioned in the first place. Students who were supportive of OSPIRG being funded had no idea they were getting that much money, and

when informed, their faces wrinkled in puzzlement: "They get that much? They should get maybe ten thousand at the most." Even at their budget hearing, the students(?) they had used to pack to room, hold signs and wear buttons were overheard remarking "I don't know why I'm here, someone just told me to come." While this kind of choreography is admirable, it did not change the nature of their organization or the facts of their budget request.

Presently, OSPIRG has set its sights on student government, seeking to attain through control of student government what it previously could not. And as interesting as it is that a 501 (c) 3 organization cannot carry on any propaganda or otherwise attempt to influence legislation, it is even more interesting to note that a number of OSPIRG leaders who hold office in the organization also hold public office at PSU and have been involved in influencing legislative outcomes all year. Before examining their budget, maybe OSPIRG should examine the law and its status as a non-profit organization. For next year, students should be prepared to tell OSPIRG a third time: keep **our** money on **our** campus.

## The Debate Over Marriage

Supporters of gay marriage claim that the government should not be concerned with the private lives of law-abiding citizens – sex and marriage between consenting adults, they argue, has no reason to be regulated by government. The foundation of marriage is love, and two homosexuals are just as capable of loving each other as two heterosexuals.

On a purely emotional, abstract level this argument for gay marriage is convincing to the American public. After all, the gay lifestyle is increasingly becoming accepted as normal behavior in mainstream society. Whether you believe this is right or not, the fact is that society's attitude toward homosexuality is something that cannot be restricted by government. Since homosexuals are just regular people, why are we forbidding them to marry each other?

The Massachusetts Supreme Court, for one, does not believe we should. Ever since the court ruled that a ban on gay marriage is unconstitutional, the country has been intensely debating the implications of the ruling. Most of the arguments against gay marriage are based on religious codes of moral sexual behavior, while the arguments in support tend to be centered on open-minded, secular concepts of freedom. Both sides, unfortunately, resort to emotive squabble and avoid logic altogether.

The main argument against gay marriage – "it would degenerate an institution our civilization is based upon" – is a joke. Divorce rates are tremendously high, adultery is the norm, and if there is any institution that is already in moral disar-

ray, it is marriage. Allowing homosexuals to legally marry would not degenerate marriage. It would just make it nearly impossible to define.

Based upon the Massachusetts ruling, a Utah man is already contesting his state's anti-polygamy laws. His reasoning is identical to that of pro-gay-marriage advocates: he and his wife, as well as the other woman he wants to marry, are all adults who willingly want to enter into the sanctity of marriage together. It is even part of their constitutionally protected religious beliefs. What is the government's place in controlling their personal lives if they all love each other? Most people are opposed to polygamy, but that is because they are biased in their personal beliefs – and individual notions of morality have no place in the courtroom. Right?

If we recognize marriage as something other than a union between one man and one woman, the proverbial 'flood-gates' will be open to lawsuits from people who want to engage in polygamy, adult incest, and every other imaginable dispute over the official definition of marriage. Since our society accepts homosexuality to a large degree, but finds these other behaviors to be reprehensible, the system of marriage will become entangled in ambiguous legalisms, all of which rely not on legal precedent but on the whim of what is socially acceptable. At this point there will be only two options: either discard marriage as a legal concept altogether, or allow the people to define it any way they want to. No matter what that means.

# Two Sides of the Same Coin

The political motivations behind foreign policy criticism. BY MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI

In the not-so-distant past, U.S. involvement in the NATO bombing campaign in Kosovo was regarded by Republicans as a “chilling comedy of errors that has defined our foreign policy,” according to Republican representative Tom DeLay. Those on the right wing often noted with irony that Clinton himself had desperately avoided serving in Vietnam, but did not seem to have similar trepidations about putting soldiers in harm’s way.

Conservatives such as DeLay were wary of the reasoning behind the Kosovo campaign, dismissing the massive Serbian ‘ethnic cleansing’ operation against Albanians as being “falsely described as a huge humanitarian problem, when in comparison to other places, it was nothing.” The conflict in Kosovo, like the wars in Bosnia and Croatia, was seen as a problem in a turbulent region on the other side of the world in which the U.S. had no business getting mixed up in.

Liberals were far more permissive. Angry hordes of peaceniks were nowhere to be found, and media superstars kept oddly quiet. The violently disintegrating Yugoslavia didn’t pose any threat to the U.S., and wasn’t even suspected of possessing WMD, but the atrocities committed by President Slobodan Milosevic seemed to justify military action. After all, the U.N. indicted him on countless breaches of the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity – “murder; torture; cruel treatment ... genocide and the complicity in genocide....” America wouldn’t put up with such a maniac.

In 2003, the situation was dramatically reversed. Once again, the U.S. was going to war in order to end a madman’s brutal regime, led by a President who had weaseled out of fighting in Vietnam. This time, however, Republicans were staunchly in support of campaign, and anyone who questioned the commander-in-chief while American troops were fighting overseas was suspected of questionable patriotism, if not an all-out

treachery. This enflamed the leftist anti-war crowd, who were suddenly aghast at the prospect of the U.S. acting as a global policeman, and accused the American public of being bamboozled by a deceptive president. The irony was hardly noticed by anyone. The wars in the former Yugoslavia and Iraq had one



overwhelming similarity – opposition to the military engagement was not due to a genuine distaste for war, but by political hostility toward the presiding administration.

During the conflict in Kosovo, as well as the other peace keeping missions in the former Yugoslavia, conservatives lumped the war in with every other gripe they had with Clinton, especially the Monica Lewinsky and Whitewater scandal, because they believed the president to be a man of low character who shamelessly pandered to the international community. Similarly, the thousands of people across the U.S. who took to the streets protesting the invasion of Iraq were largely driven by their hatred of Bush’s policies on the environment, social issues, abortion, and his connection to ‘big business.’ In both cases, the actual war seemed like little more than a pretext to attack the principles, and oftentimes the character, of the commander-in-chief. Unfortunately, in the process of vilifying the man behind the war, people lost sight of the real enemies of humanity – Milosevic and Hussein.

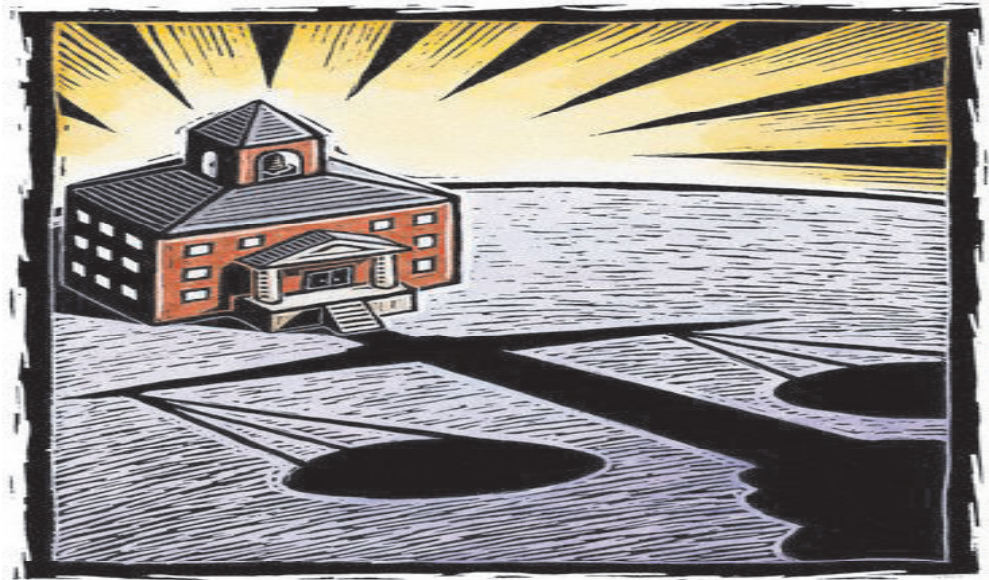
The necessity for military action against Iraq, as well as Kosovo, was not as

immediate as it was against Germany during World War II. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, there is no single country in the world that can truly endanger the United States. Aside from the insidious menace of terrorism, this nation lacks a formidable enemy, and for this reason, every war it undertakes may seem superfluous. This incredible military power leaves America with an uncertain image of itself. Is the U.S. a benevolent defender of weaker nations or an arrogant imperialist and exploiter?

The left wing and the right wing try to use this ambiguity for political polarization. Each tries to depict the other as irrational, even self-destructive. Currently, the extreme left’s view of the Bush administration, and of conservatives in general, is almost cartoonish: capitalist racists whose ideal world is ruled by decadent corporations. The conservative portrayal of the left – anti-American socialists willing to hand over U.S. sovereignty to the United Nations – is equally ridiculous. Only demagogues like Michael Moore and Michael Savage profit from this attitude. Splitting the country along political lines puts us at war against ourselves.

The arguments against intervention in Kosovo – exaggerated problem, misleading motives, excessive cost – have been adopted by the left. And conservatives have recognized the value of ‘nation building,’ an idea they once derided Clinton for. Perhaps this indicates that the goals of this country are more unified than it might appear. Rifts between different platforms and political conflicts are necessary and wonderful consequences of a free society. But to understand its place in the world, and its responsibility, America cannot let its perception get clouded by purely partisan motivations. The opposing view is oftentimes not far removed from one’s own.





# Fighting for the Right to Choose

## School vouchers and the liberal hypocrisy of choice.

By Adam Wilkie

Since taking office three years ago Bush has frequently been the target of horrific insults alluding to the fact that he is somehow racist and could care less about the poor in America. Recent actions by the Bush administration to push school vouchers through Congress have exposed that this argument and many of those in the Democratic party are a complete fraud. Public education in the United States has been nothing short of a disaster throughout my lifetime, and for many years previously. Education specifically within inner cities has been the worst, robbing children of the tools necessary to succeed. Schools in these communities have failed their students dramatically and someone is finally taking action with a trial program of school vouchers.

The causes for the failure of public schools are numerous. In addition to teachers unions and occasional funding issues, the main problem is, most frequently, uninterested parents. The Bush administration has launched an all out assault on the education disaster, and for once schools are being held accountable for how well they educate. What

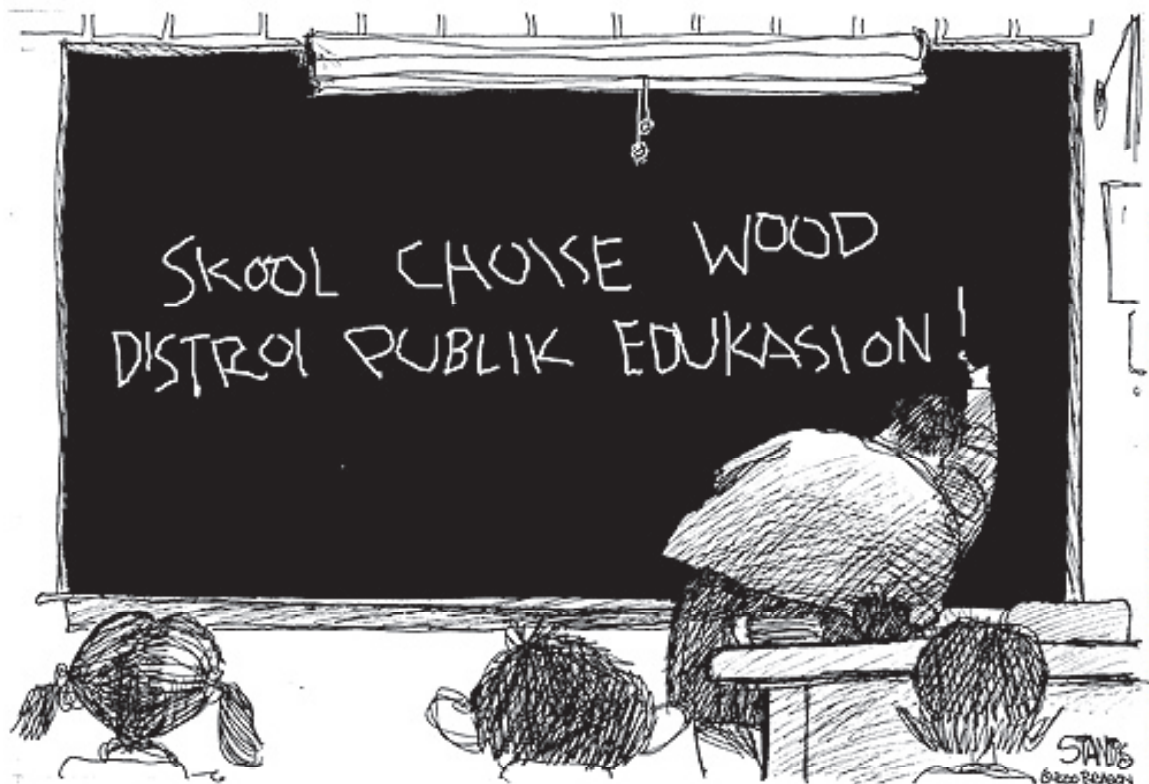
a concept. For some strange reason competition is believed to have an effect on the amount of effort put forward - capitalism at its finest. Monopolies consistently provide lousy products to their consumers, and a monopoly is exactly what public education is and has been in this country. Working off this crazy philosophy President Bush has begun to hold schools accountable for their effectiveness and offer students the chance to escape these publicly financed failures.

President Bush's most recent plan has been to give vouchers to students who attend failing schools so that they may enroll in private schools where they will have a chance to succeed. This idea is particularly troubling for Democrats since it might expose the lies they have been telling the poor and minorities that Republicans supposedly don't care about them. Virtually all of the families affected through school vouchers would be poor, working class, or minorities.

Liberal politicians everywhere sink into a cold sweat with the idea that Republicans will be successful in this venture. The thought that Democrats

will lose their stranglehold (near 90%) on the African American vote is frightening, and would inevitably jeopardize their ability to ever reclaim control of Congress or the White House. The troubling thing for Democrats is that polls show a majority of blacks support the idea, while the liberal politicians they elect are stridently against it all the while sending their children to elite private schools. The tide is slowly turning. In addition to Dianne Feinstein (the California version of Hilary Clinton) supporting school vouchers, the leaders of the most troubled school system in the country (D.C.) are also behind the idea.

Liberal opposition to school vouchers is most shocking because they spend at least some of their time screaming that "women should have the right to choose". In these instances they are referring to abortion, and the hypocrisy quickly emerges. For some reason to be able to think like a liberal you must believe that women should have the right to choose whether or not their child sees a sharp pair of scissors and a vacuum but not be able to choose what school that child is able to attend should they avoid



the aforementioned procedure.

The three primary liberal arguments against this proposal are ridiculous, and quickly evaporate upon any credible analysis. The first argument is that it takes money out of public schools harming them even further. This is ridiculous since from my experience school funding had little to do with the quality of the education I received. In fact, the worst school district in the country (D.C.) spends the highest amount per student. This argument is further weakened by the fact that the current bill before Congress money doesn't even divert money out of public schools to pay the private school tuition. In most other programs currently underway the funding comes from private foundations set up specifically by Republicans to provide poor minority students with a better education. Yet despite having even more money per student to spend, Democrats are still opposed. I'm beginning to think the reason why they are so against the issue is because it wasn't their idea.

The second argument against school vouchers is the argument for the separation of church and state. This argument fails on the simple fact that not all

private schools are religious. It is true that most are, but it is in no way a requisite for participation in the program. If school voucher programs became widespread there could potentially be numerous schools opened specifically to serve voucher students with no religious theme whatsoever. This argument was quickly abandoned by the left as they realized that it lacked any credibility.

The final argument revolves around the success of the trial programs and the historical performance of private schools. Liberals like to argue that private schools churn out better students because they only accept exceptional students to begin with. Trial programs have shown that regardless of the prior ability of the student, there was dramatic improvement after only a short time in the private school. Low income students have the ability to show even more improvement in such a setting due to the "catch up" effect. For example, B students can only improve a single letter grade, while a D student has a lot more ground to make up.

One beneficial side effect of a school voucher program is that they may finally force public schools to provide the

quality education demanded of them and eliminate the need for a school voucher program altogether. It is appalling that Democrats would be against an issue that would provide such a benefit to so many poor and under-privileged children. I have no doubt in my mind that Hilary Clinton would be leading a parade of liberals to support this issue had it not been spearheaded by George W. Bush, but Ted "Chappaquiddick" Kennedy. It is disgusting, but not surprising, that Democrats would put their own political ambitions over the future of young inner city children across America.

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News and Commentary  
Updated Daily



# The Political Problem of Islam

By Roger Scruton

Islam is a world religion with adherents far beyond the lands of the Arabs. Moreover, between five and ten percent of Arabs are Christians, and in recent times Christian Arabs have played a disproportionate role in the revival of Arabic literature. It would therefore be a gross mistake to identify Islam with Arabic culture, or to believe that a full understanding of Islamic thought and politics can be obtained merely from a study of the Middle East. At the same time, the faith, law, and worldview of the Muslim diaspora directly derives from a text whose meaning and emotional weight is contained within its language, and that language is Arabic. Although there arose in the wake of the Koran an extraordinary civilization, and a literary and artistic culture which matched those of contemporary Europe, the principal source of Islamic cultural achievements is the single book from which the faith began.<sup>1</sup>

A student of Muslim thought is immediately struck by how narrowly the classical thinkers pondered the problems of political order, and how sparse and theological are their theories of institutions. Apart from the caliphate—the office of “successor to” or “substitute for” the Prophet—no human institution occupies such thinkers as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiya, or Saif Ibn ‘Umar al-Asadi for long. Discussions of sovereignty—*sultan*, *mulk*—tend to be exhortatory, instructions for the ruler that will help him to guide his people in the ways of the faith.<sup>2</sup> The *Filasafa* (i.e., thinkers influenced by Greek philosophy)

composed their intellectual agenda by synthesizing the Koran with what they knew of Aristotle and Plato. But the result is a peculiarly frozen vision of the art of politics as the Greeks had expounded it.

Al-Farabi, for example, describes the philosopher-king of Plato as the prophet, lawgiver, and *imam* to his community, arguing that “the meaning of *imam*, philosopher, and lawgiver is one and the same.”<sup>3</sup> He emphasizes the distinction between reason and revelation, as pondered by the contemporary Mu‘tazili school of theologians, who held that reason could supplement the revelations provided by the Prophet. And he acknowledges the possibility of a political system based purely on reason and directed to the earthly needs of the citizens. But the true system, he insists, is founded in revelation, and directed towards happiness in the world to come. Ibn Sina (Avicenna) likewise gives precedence to revelation, and his ideal state is founded on prophecy and guided by the immutable *shari‘a*. The constitution of such a state is prophetically revealed, and is “our Sunna which was sent down from heaven.”<sup>4</sup>

Law is fundamental to Islam, since the religion grew from Muhammad’s attempt to give an abiding code of conduct to his followers. Hence arose the four surviving schools (known as *madhahib*, or sects) of jurisprudence, with their subtle devices (*hila*) for discovering creative solutions within the letter (though not always the spirit) of the law.<sup>5</sup> These four schools



(*Hanafi, Hanbali, Shafi and Maliki*) are accepted by each other as legitimate, but may produce conflicting judgments in particular cases. As a result, the body of Islamic jurisprudence (the *fiqh*) is now enormous. Such legal knowledge notwithstanding, discussions of the nature of law, the grounds of its legitimacy, and the distinguishing marks of legal, as opposed to coercive, social structures are minimal. Classical Islamic jurisprudence, like classical Islamic philosophy, assumes that law originates in divine command, as revealed through the Koran and the Sunna, and as deduced by analogy (*qiyas*) or consensus (*ijma'*). Apart from these four sources (*usul*) of law, no other source is recognized. Law, in other words, is the will of God, and sovereignty is legitimate only insofar as it reflects God's will.

There is nevertheless one great classical thinker who addressed the realities of social order, and the nature of the power exerted through it, in secular rather than theological terms: the fourteenth-century Tunisian polymath Ibn Khaldun. His *Muqaddimah* is a kind of prolegomenon to the study of history and offers a general perspective on the rise and decline of human societies. Ibn Khaldun's primary subject of study had been the Bedouin societies of North Africa; but he generalized also from his knowledge of Muslim history. Societies, he argued, are held together by a cohesive force, which he called '*asabiya* (*'asaba*, to bind, '*asab*, a nerve, ligament, or sinew—cf. the Latin *religio*). In tribal communities '*asabiya* is strong, and creates resistance to outside control, to taxation, and to government. In cities, '*asabiya* is weak or non-existent, and society is held together by force exerted by the ruling dynasty. But dynasties too need '*asabiya* if they are to maintain their power. Hence, they inevitably decline, softened by the luxury of city life, and within four generations will be conquered by outsiders who enjoy the dynamic cohesion of the tribe.

That part of Ibn Khaldun's theory is still influential: Malise Ruthven, for example, believes that it casts light on the contemporary Muslim world, in which '*asabiya* rather than institutions remains the principal cohesive force.<sup>6</sup> But Ibn Khaldun's secular theory of society dwells on pre-political unity rather than political order. His actual political theory is far more Islamic in tone. He introduces a distinction between two kinds of government—that founded on religion (*siyasa diniya*) and that founded on reason (*siyasa 'aqliya*).<sup>7</sup> The second form of government is more political and less theocratic, since its laws do not rest on divine authority but on rational principles that can be understood and accepted without the benefit of faith. But Ibn Khaldun finds himself unable to approve of this form of politics. Secular law, he argues, leads to a decline of '*asabiya*. Moreover the impediment (*wazi'*) that constrains us to abide by the law is, in the rational state, merely external. In the state founded on the

*shari'a* this impediment is internal, operating directly on the will of the subject. In short, the emergence of secular politics from the prophetic community is a sign not of civilized progress but of moral decline.

In fact, Ibn Khaldun is rare among Muslim philosophers in seeing the political as a separate form of human life, with its own laws (*qawanin siyasiya*), aspirations, and procedures. His bleak view of political order is due to his bleak view of the city generally. Without the pre-political '*asabiya*, cities inevitably decay. Ibn Khaldun's underlying purpose was to distinguish the caliphate (*khilafa*), which had persisted during the reign of the four "righteous" caliphs, from the worldly sovereignty (*mulk*)

that had gradually replaced it. Only the caliphate had either the right or the power to survive the collapse of earthly dynasties, and Muslims must work constantly to restore it as the rule of God on earth.

For all his subtlety, therefore, Ibn Khaldun ends by endorsing the traditional, static idea of government according to the *shari'a*. In short, the Muslim conception of law as holy law, pointing the unique way to salvation, and applying to every area of human life, involves a *confiscation of the political*. Those matters which, in Western societies, are resolved by negotiation, compromise, and the laborious work of offices and committees, are the object of eternal decrees, either laid down explicitly in the holy book, or discerned there by some religious leader—whose authority, however, can always be questioned by a rival *imam* or jurist, since the *shari'a* recognizes no office or institution as endowed with any independent lawmaking power.

Three features of the original message embodied in the Koran have proved decisive for Muslim political thought. First, the Messenger of God was presented with the problem of organizing and leading an autonomous community of followers. Unlike Jesus, he was not a religious visionary operating under an all-embracing imperial law, but a political leader, inspired by a revelation of God's purpose

and determined to assert that purpose against the surrounding world of tribal government and pagan superstition.

Second, the Suras of the Koran make no distinction between the public and the private spheres: what is commanded to the believers is commanded in response to the many problems, great and small, that emerged during the course of Muhammad's political mission. Laws governing marriage, property, usury, and commerce occur side-by-side with rules of domestic ritual, good manners, and personal hygiene. The conduct of war and the treatment of criminals are dealt with in the same tone of voice as diet and defecation. The whole life of the community is set out in a disordered, but ultimately consistent, set of absolutes. And it is impossible to judge from the text itself whether any of these laws is more important,

**"In short, the emergence of secular politics from the prophetic community is a sign not of civilized progress but of moral decline."**

**"The Muslim conception of law as holy law ... involves a confiscation of the political."**



## CON

Mike Arrington

What would it take for you to support a war? In presenting their case to the American public and the international community, the White House willfully ignored CIA intelligence that told them Saddam did not pose any sort of imminent threat; that would have been unacceptable to their audience. The first justification for war was Saddam's terror links. Six months after Bush's 'Mission Accomplished' speech, no legitimate connection has been found between Al Qaeda and Iraq, even if Bush wants us to believe it: "we need to think about Saddam Hussein using Al Qaeda to do his dirty work, to not leave fingerprints behind" Saddam is an evil person by any standard, but he had nothing to do with 9/11, regardless of what a high percentage of Fox News viewers believe. That's okay: After the initial fervor, Bush gave up on terrorism as the justification, citing weapons of mass destruction instead. Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy Secretary of Defense, made this clear with this statement he gave to the Washington Post:

"For bureaucratic reasons, we settled on one issue, weapons of mass destruction (as justification for invading Iraq) because it was the one reason everyone could agree on"

Agreed, no weapons turned up. Bush, in one of the last voluntary remarks on WMD he made (in May), before sweeping them under the rug, said "We'll find them. It'll be a matter of time to do so" Bush, at least, is clear unlike the finite time we gave the UN, we merely have to wait an indefinite period before we can find these alleged stockpiles. Rumsfeld's comments are less consistently on message:

"We know where they are. They're in the area around Tikrit and Baghdad and east, west, south and north somewhat."

Sounded good, and those in opposition to the war hoped he'd be right, but Rumsfeld ditched his mystery reports and optimism two months later:

"We never believed that we'd just stumble over weapons of mass destruction in that country"

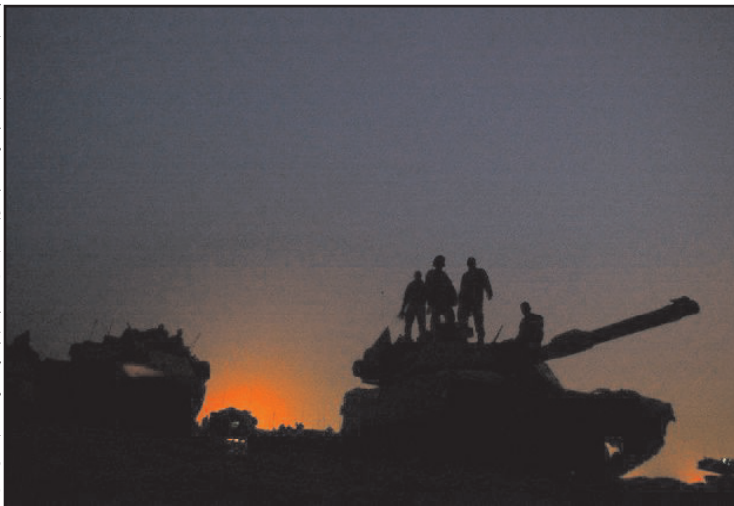
With the Al Qaeda link defunct and WMD postponed, the Bush administration had to start putting more emphasis on Saddam's character to make this a moral move. But at the same time as losing Saddam, many Iraqis lost employment, adequate food, and basic utilities, and are still without these things. Virtually all experts on the region predicted no real government or infrastructure could rise without a massive infusion of both cash and military manpower, yet Bush steamed ahead. If we hadn't struck, the first \$87 billion Bush asked for could have given full four-year scholarships to 1.6 million undergrads, or the fiscal

conservative could have simply shrunk the largest deficit we've had in ten years.

Saddam was an unfathomably horrible dictator, but greater atrocities are happening in the Congo and North Korea, and North Korea is playing with 'nuclear' weapons. By choosing to attack Iraq at this time, Bush stretched our troops further than they have been at any time since Vietnam. If we are faced with another major military engagement at the moment, like an attack by the real terrorists, the ones who flew planes into the World Trade Center, there is a good chance we will not be able to act decisively: we've crippled our ability to fight what we rallied for. While we administer Iraq, the Taliban and Al Qaeda are running around relatively freely in Afghanistan. Because of Bush's hubris, we've created an environment in both Afghanistan and Iraq where young men may grow up with the willingness to sacrifice their lives in order to slaughter innocent Americans.

Since the war has ended we have left ourselves militarily weaker than we've been since the debacle of Vietnam, we've given tens of billions of dollars to Halliburton, we've alienated most of the Muslim world, we've contributed to the destabilization of an entire region, and we've had over five hundred of our soldiers die. We have not found weapons of mass destruction, significantly improved the lives of Iraqis, made clear a connection between Saddam and 9/11, or dealt with the perpetrators of those horrible acts, and the neither the administration nor the conservative pundits have justified the war.

## War in



## PRO

Shahriyar Smith

The most serious problem with anti-war criticism is that it reeks of political opportunism. If everything goes wrong for America in Iraq, Democrats win big. Their subsequent tone on the issue then, is not surprising.

The three main reasons for the war in Iraq: weapons of mass destruction, ties to terrorism, and the morally despicable nature of Saddam Hussein's regime. Of these three, the issue of weapons of mass destruction is the most commonly distorted and misrepresented.

The link to terror is clear as we have encountered, killed or captured numerous Al-Qaeda in Iraq. The "resistance" is not so much an Iraqi resistance as it is a resistance of foreign fighters drawn to Iraq by the U.S. presence there. So while U.S. presence in Iraq has had a positive effect on Libyan dictator Mouammar Khadafi, and the student movement in neighboring Iran it has also acted as a magnet, making Iraq a critical forefront in the war on terror.

The morally despicable nature of Saddam's regime is also beyond contestation. Opponents of the war point to a temporary absence of water and electricity in some areas as we continue to discover mass graves, torture chambers, rape rooms, and piles of decaying human remains. To hear their version of it, Iraqis would have been better off under Saddam. This is how far they will go. They need to downplay the atrocities of a genocidal madman for political gain.

The issue of weapons of mass destruction therefore, is the primary target of choice for anti-war critics. First, it must be remembered that it was never up to us to find weapons of mass destruction. In signing U.N. resolution

1441, Saddam admitted to possessing weapons of mass destruction and committed to disarm. As Robert Kagan and William Kristol have pointed out, "Here is

what was known by 1998 based on Iraq's own admissions:

- \* That in the years immediately prior to the first Gulf War, Iraq produced at least 3.9 tons of VX, a deadly nerve gas, and acquired 805 tons of precursor ingredients for the production of more VX.
- \* That Iraq had produced or imported some 4,000 tons of ingredients to produce other types of poison gas.
- \* That Iraq had produced 8,500 liters of anthrax.
- \* That Iraq had produced 500 bombs fitted with parachutes for the purpose of delivering poison gas or germ payloads.
- \* That Iraq had produced 550 artillery shells filled with mustard gas.
- \* That Iraq had produced or imported 107,500 casings for chemical weapons.
- \* That Iraq had produced at least 157 aerial bombs filled with germ agents.
- \* That Iraq had produced 25 missile warheads containing germ agents (anthrax, aflatoxin, and botulinum).

Again, this list of weapons of mass destruction is not what the Iraqi government was suspected of producing. (That would be a longer list, including an Iraqi nuclear program that the German intelligence service had concluded in 2001 might produce a bomb within three years.) It was what the Iraqis admitted producing. And it is this list of weapons--not any CIA analysis under either the Clinton or Bush administrations--that has been at the heart of the Iraq crisis."

The expectation for inspectors to go to Iraq and find weapons of mass destruction is ridiculous. You don't send 100 guys into a desert the size of California and say "start looking." There are any number of things that Saddam could have done to the weapons we knew and he admitted he had. He could have hidden them, destroyed them, or transported them out of country. It was up to Saddam to cooperate and disarm, which he clearly made a mockery of doing. And let us not forget that this man rode his regime down in flames before fully cooperating with the United Nations. Given the context of the war on terror, the information available, and Saddam's covert, uncooperative stance, any Commander-In-Chief that would not have taken

us to war in Iraq would not have been doing his duty as President to protect and defend the United States of America.

# n Iraq



more threatening, or more dear to God's heart than the others. The opportunity never arises, for the student of the Koran, to distinguish those matters which are open to political negotiation from those which are absolute duties to God. In effect, everything is owed to God, with the consequence that nothing is owed to Caesar.

Third, the social vision of the Koran is shaped through and through by the tribal order and commercial dealings of Muhammad's Arabia. It is a vision of people bound to each other by family ties and tribal loyalties, but answerable for their actions to God alone. No mention is made of institutions, corporations, societies, or procedures with any independent authority. Life, as portrayed in the Koran, is a stark, unmediated confrontation between the individual and his God, in which the threat of punishment and the hope of reward are never far from the thoughts of either party.

Therefore, although the Koran is the record of a political project, it lays no foundations for an impersonal political order, but vests all power and authority in the Messenger of God. There are no provisions for the Messenger's successor, or even for a priesthood. The office of *imam*—the one who "stands in front," i.e., who leads the community in prayer—was assumed by Muhammad until the day when illness prevented him from performing it and he asked his father-in-law Abu Bakr to perform the office in his stead.

It is still true that an *imam* has no institutional authority in the Sunni tradition and is merely a man whose personal qualities and religious knowledge fit him for the role. The title of Imam is reserved by the Shi'ites for Muhammad's first cousin 'Ali and his descendants, who are regarded as the true successors of the Prophet. But even in the Shi'ite tradition, there is no conception of a priestly office that confers authority on the one who holds it: authority is bestowed directly by the power of God. This point is made further evident by the fact that, according to the Shi'ites, the line of *imams* ceased after the twelfth, who is the still living "hidden" imam, destined to reappear in the last days as the *mahdi* or "Director," and who, according to the Koran, will announce the Day of Judgment. Hence, no living cleric can act with any greater authority than that conferred by his own personal qualities in the eyes of God—unless he can show himself actually to be the hidden *imam*, revealed at last after centuries of divine displeasure, a feat which the Ayatollah Khomeini set out to accomplish, but with only transient success.

The office of caliph began as an attempt to recapture a vanished personal authority. Hence, caliphs repeatedly failed to give proof of their legitimacy, and the first three of them began a lengthy tradition of dying at the hands of assassins. Those who rule in the Prophet's name seldom satisfy their subjects that they are entitled to do so, since the authority that is looked for in an Islamic ruler is—to use Weber's idiom—a charismatic rather than a legal-rational form. Islamic revivals almost always begin from a sense of the corruption and godlessness of the ruling power, and a desire to rediscover the holy leader who will restore the pure way of life laid down by the Prophet. There seems to be no room in Islamic thinking for

the idea—vital to the history of Western constitutional government—of an office that works for the benefit of the community, regardless of the virtues and vices of the one who fills it.

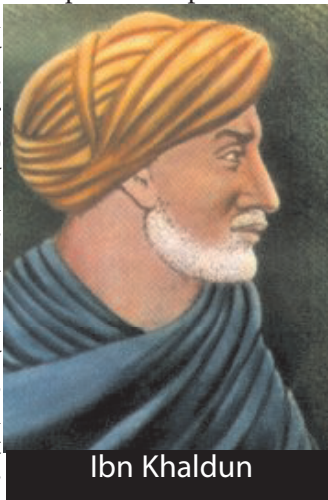
The reader of the Koran will be struck by the radical change of tone that the revelations exhibit after the Prophet has been forced into exile at Medina. The early Meccan Suras are short, intensely lyrical, and written in a free rhyming prose that echoes the style of the pagan poets of Muhammad's Arabia. They invoke the natural world and the wonderful signs of its Creator, being hymns of praise to the single omnipotent God who speaks directly to his worshippers. They are the great dawn-vision of an impassioned monotheist, from whose soul oppressive shadows are being chased away.

The Medina Suras are much longer and often cantankerous. They deal with the trials and tribulations of leadership, and the revelations are often granted as concrete responses to the problems of communal life. Muhammad's project is revealed at every step, and it is a remarkable one: to replace the tribal society and its pagan gods with a new, universal order—the Islamic *umma*—founded on belief in the one true God and on the acceptance of his commands. To achieve this result Muhammad had to persuade his followers that he was God's messenger; he had also to give proof of God's favor by success in war.

Although the community at Medina had escaped from its persecutors, it retained a powerful sense of belonging elsewhere. They were *al-muhajiroun*, the ones in emigration or exile (*hijrah*), and the experience of exile is invoked again and again in the Islamic revivals of our times. The absolute tone of command of the Medina Suras therefore goes hand-in-hand with an intense nostalgia, and it is not surprising that the idea of pilgrimage to the distant home should have rooted itself in Muhammad's mind to become one "pillar" (*rukṇ*) among the five that constitute the core duties of the Muslim.

I mention this point because it helps to explain how alien the Koranic vision of society is to any idea of territorial jurisdiction or national loyalty. In the eyes of the Koran, the place where we are is not the place where we belong, since the place where we belong is in the wrong hands. Our law therefore does not issue from our present place of abode, and gives special privileges only to the other place, which may one day be reconquered. This attitude greatly favors the notion of law as a relation between each person and God, with no special reference to territory, sovereignty, or worldly obedience. Although localities are of enormous importance in the Muslim worldview it is not because they are the *sources* of law but because they are the *object* of law, declared holy by God in his dealings with mankind. A holy place is precisely one subsumed into the divine order of things, rather than the seat, like Rome or Paris, of a territorial jurisdiction. This is of great significance in the current conflict over Jerusalem, which for the Muslim is a place set apart from its earthly surroundings just as Mecca is set apart, scarcely belonging to the geography of the actual world but existing in the numinous region of divine imperatives.

After the initial turmoils—in which the conflict between



Ibn Khaldun



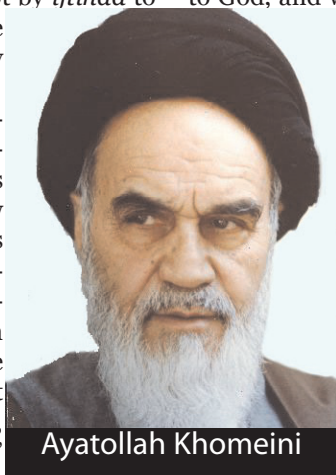
two of the righteous caliphs, 'Uthman and 'Ali, led to the split between Sunni and Shi'ite—the Muslim dynasties gained territory by conquest. The caliphate emerged as a genuine institution, though one increasingly deprived of political power. Nevertheless, the experience of settled government led to serious attempts by learned men to adapt the faith to the needs of government. This was the great period of the *hadiths*—traditions, authenticated by pious examination, which recorded such words and deeds of the Prophet as might offer guidance to a settled community. These *hadiths* are markedly more peaceful and conciliatory than the Medina Suras, and have clearly been shaped by the experience of a society in which charismatic leadership is no longer the norm. They are an attempt to read back into the prophetic source of Islam the real achievements of Islamic forms of government. At the same time there arose the four schools of *fiqh*, which bring together the reflections of jurists over generations, and show the attempt by *ijtihad* to establish a genuine rule of law in places where law is nevertheless seen as issuing placelessly and timelessly from the will of God.

Even in that great period of jurisprudence, however, the *shari'a* remained defective in the crucial matter of legal personality. As Ruthven has pointed out, there is no provision in Islamic law for the corporation as a legal person, with rights and duties of its own.<sup>8</sup> The city, the committee, the mosque itself, do not occur as independent subjects of the law, and although Muslim countries abound in charitable foundations—the *awqaf* (singular *waqf*)—they are conceived not as property in the hands of a corporate person, but as property that has been simply “removed” from circulation or which has “ceased” (*waqafa*). In Ruthven's words, there was no “juridical definition of the public sphere” in classical Islamic jurisprudence,<sup>9</sup> a fact which greatly impeded the formation of a genuine political order. Hence “stealing from the public treasury was not held subject to the *hadd* [i.e., the divinely ordained punishment for theft], because the illegal act was not committed against a juristic agent independent of the thief who was, along with every other Muslim, considered part-owner of the *mal Allah*, and thus part-owner of what he had stolen.”<sup>10</sup>

Two momentous consequences follow from the adoption of the *shari'a*. First, because it is a law governing only Muslims, the *shari'a* leaves the status of other communities undefined. These other communities remain strictly “outside the law,” and must either convert or accept the status of *dhimma*—which means protected by treaty or covenant. Only “people of the book”—i.e., Jews, Christians, and (in Persia) Zoroastrians—have traditionally been accorded this status. *Dhimma* is offered in return for the payment of taxes, and grants no clear and justiciable rights apart from a general right of protection.<sup>11</sup> Although free communities of Christians and Jews often thrived under Islamic law, there was no formal or legal acceptance of their right to worship in their own manner, and their property was subject to confiscation on more or less arbitrary grounds. The Turkish *millet* system rectified this, but depended for its authority on the secular rule of the sultan and had no authority in the *shari'a*.

Second, the way of life that grows under the aegis of the *shari'a* is profoundly domestic, without any public or ceremonial character except in the matter of communal worship. The mosque and its school or *madrasah*, together with the *souq* or bazaar, are the only genuine public spaces in traditional Muslim towns. The street is a lane among private houses, which lie along it and across it in a disorderly jumble of inward-turning courtyards. The Muslim city is a creation of the *shari'a*—a hive of private spaces, built cell on cell. Above its rooftops the minarets point to God like outstretched fingers, resounding with the voice of the muezzin as he calls the faithful to prayer.

I mention these two features because they are often overlooked, despite their enormous importance in the psychology and the politics of the Islamic world. The Muslim city is explicitly a city for Muslims, a place of congregation in which individuals and their families live side-by-side in obedience to God, and where non-Muslims exist only on sufferance. The



Ayatollah Khomeini

mosque is the link to God, and the pious believe that no building should overtop the minarets. Many a Muslim carries this image in his heart, and when he encounters the Western city, with its open spaces, its wide streets, its visible interiors, its skyscrapers dwarfing the few religious buildings, he is apt to feel both wonder and rage at the God-defying arrogance that has so completely eclipsed the life of piety and prayer. It is not merely of anecdotal significance that, when the terrorist leader Mohammed Atta left his native Egypt for Hamburg to continue his studies in architecture, it was not to learn about the modernist buildings that disfigure German cities, but to write a thesis on the restoration of the ancient city of Aleppo.<sup>12</sup> When he led the attack

against the World Trade Center, Atta was assaulting a symbol of economic, aesthetic, and spiritual paganism.

Those who see religion simply as a set of doctrines concerning the origin of the world, the laws that govern it, and the destiny of mankind will think of faith merely as a substitute for rational argument, destined to crumble before the advance of science or to persist, if at all, as a jumble of tattered superstitions in the midst of a world that refutes them. But doctrine is the least important part of religion, as Muhammad came quickly to see. Communities are not formed by doctrine, but by obedience, and the two great instruments for securing obedience are ritual and law. The Muslim faith involves constant rehearsal of the believer's submission to God. The repetition of sacred words and formulae, the exact performance of gestures whose only explanation is that they have been commanded, the obligatory times of prayer, the annual fast and all the duties required by it, the dietary laws, the pilgrimage to Mecca with its myriad obligatory actions—all this, which is meaningless to the skeptical outsider, is the stuff of consolation.<sup>13</sup> Ritual places individuals on a plane of absolute equality; it overcomes distance, extinguishes the self in the flow of collective emotion, and refreshes the worshipper with a sense that he has regained favor in God's sight and hence his place in the community of believers. Ritual is a discipline of the body that conveys and reinforces a discipline of the soul. It is the outward manifestation of the collective act of submission (*islam*) that unites the



## ► Cover

community of believers. And it is one undeniable source of the peace and gentleness of the old Muslim city.

In short, Islam offers an unparalleled form of *membership*, and one whose appeal is all the greater in that it transcends time and place, joining the believer to a universal *umma* whose only sovereign is God. Even if it may appear, to the skeptical modernist, as a medieval fossil, Islam has an unrivalled ability to compensate for what is lacking in modern experience. It rationalizes and validates the condition of exile: the condition in which we all find ourselves, severed by the hectic motion of mechanized life from the archaic need for membership. Nothing evokes this more clearly than the collective rite in which the faithful turn to Mecca with their prayers—projecting their submission and their longing away from the place where they are to that other and holy place where they are not, and whose contours are defined not by geography but by religious need.

Islam, in other words, is less a theological doctrine than a system of *piety*. To submit to it is to discover the rules for an untroubled life and an easy conscience. Moreover, rooted in the ritual and taking constant nourishment from it is a system of morality that clarifies those matters which must be clarified if people are to live with each other in peace. It is a system that safeguards the family as the primary object of loyalty and trust; that clarifies and disciplines sexual conduct; that sanctifies ordinary obligations of friendship and kinship; and that lays down rules for business which have a power to exonerate as well as to blame. Even if this morality, like the rituals that feed it, threatens those freedoms which Westerners take for granted and which the rising generation of Muslim immigrants wish to exploit, it has the singular advantage of clarity. It tells the faithful what they must do in order to be on good terms with God; and what they must do is entirely a matter of private life, ritual, and worship. The public sphere can be left to look after itself.<sup>14</sup>

In the context of Western *anomie* and self-indulgence, therefore, Muslim immigrants cling to their faith, seeing it as something superior to the surrounding moral chaos, and therefore more worthy of obedience than the secular law which permits so much sin. Their children may rebel for a while against the strict sexual codes and patriarchal absolutes of the Muslim family; but they too, in any crisis, are drawn to their ancestral faith, which offers a vision of moral security they find nowhere in the public space that Western political systems have devoted themselves to generating.

The writ of holy law runs through all things, but this does not mean that Islamic societies have been governed solely by the *shari'a*. On the contrary, in almost all respects relevant to the

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**"...these [secular] laws have no independent legitimacy in the eyes of those compelled to obey them. They do not create a space outside religion in which freedom is the norm. On the contrary, they merely add to the constraints of the holy law the rules of a political order which is backed by no de jure authority, only by de facto power."**

government of a large society, the *shari'a* is radically deficient. It has therefore been necessary in every epoch for the ruler to lay down laws of his own which will guarantee his power, facilitate administration, and permit the collection of taxes. But these laws have no independent legitimacy in the eyes of those compelled to obey them. They do not create a space outside religion in which freedom is the norm. On the contrary, they merely add to the constraints of the holy law the rules of a political order which is backed by no *de jure* authority, only by *de facto* power. In any upheaval they are rejected entirely as the arbitrary edicts of a usurper. Hence, there is no scope in a traditional Islamic society for the kinds of purely political development, through the patient building of institutions and secular laws, that we know in the West. Change, when it comes, takes the form of a crisis, as power is challenged from below in the name of the one true Power above.

If the only way in which a law can be legitimated is by deriving it from a command of God, then clearly all secular laws are seen as mere expedients adopted by the ruler. In such circumstances it is unlikely that any kind of constitutional, representative, or democratic government will emerge. Although the Ottoman Empire attempted reforms that would give legitimacy to its centralized administration, these reforms—which led first to the destruction of the Empire, and then to the emergence of the modern Turkish state under Mustafah Kemal Atatürk—were explicitly "Westernizing," involving both a deliberate move away from Islamic ideas of legitimacy, and a ruthless secularization of society, with the *'ulama'* losing whatever power they had once possessed in the educational, legal, and administrative process.

The Westernizing of Turkey was made possible by its imperial history, which had imposed the obligation to govern distant provinces and recalcitrant tribes by a system of law which could only here and there be justified by some divine genealogy, and which was therefore constantly seeking legitimacy of another kind.

By remaking Turkey as a territorial rather than an imperial power, and by simultaneously secularizing and Turkifying the Ottoman culture, Atatürk created a national loyalty, a territorial jurisdiction, and a form of constitutional government. As a consequence, Turkey has been the only durable democracy in the Muslim world—although a democracy maintained as such by frequent interventions by an army loyal to the Kemalist project. This transition has not been without cost, however. Modern Turkey has been effectively severed from its past. In the ensuing search for a modern identity, young people are repeatedly attracted to radical and destabilizing ideologies, both Islamist and utopian.

This search for identity takes another but related form in the Arabic-speaking countries, and the al-Qa'eda organization should be understood as one significant result of it.<sup>15</sup> Of course, terrorism of the al-Qa'eda kind is an abnormality, repudiated by the majority of Muslims. It would be the greatest injustice to confuse Islam, as a pious way of life, with contemporary Islamism, which is an example of what Burke, writing of the French Revolutionaries, called an "armed doctrine"—a belligerent ideology bent on eradicating all opposition to its claims. Nevertheless, Islamism is not an accidental product of the crisis that Islam is currently undergoing, and the fundamental tenets of the faith must be borne in mind by those who wish to understand the terrorist movements.<sup>16</sup>

Al-Qa'eda is the personal creation of Osama bin Laden, but it derives from three pre-existing sociopolitical forces: the Wahhabite movement in Saudi Arabia; the Muslim Brotherhood that emerged in modern Egypt; and, finally, the technological education now available to disaffected Muslims throughout the Middle East.

The Wahhabite movement has its roots in the sect (*madhhab*) founded by Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780–855), whose collection of 30,000 hadiths formed the basis of the Hanbali *fiqh*. The leading principle of Hanbali jurisprudence is that law should not be formalized in rules or maxims but constantly derived afresh from the original sources by an effort of *ijtihad* that renews both the faith and the understanding of the judge. Hence, Muslims must be constantly returned to the Koran and the words of the Prophet, the authority of which cannot be overriden by political decrees or formal legal systems. Although Hanbalism has always been recognized as a legitimate school of *fiqh*, its uncompromising emphasis on the origins of the Muslim faith has made it a permanent source of opposition to the established powers in Muslim countries.

Hence, when Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (1691–1765), a native of central Arabia, sought to restore the true faith to the Prophet's sacred territory, he expressed himself in Hanbali terms. The aim was to return from the corrupt practices that flourished under the Ottoman Empire and its factitious rules and offices to the original teachings of the Prophet and his Companions. Compelled to seek asylum in Deraiah, al-Wahhab attracted the local chieftain, Muhammad ibn Sa'ud, to his cause. And it was Ibn Sa'ud's grandson who, with a fanatical and puritanical following, "liberated" Mecca from the idolatrous practices that had rooted themselves there, establishing at the same time a short-lived kingdom in Arabia, and thereafter paying for his presumption with his life.

Despite this political failure, Wahhabism took root in the Arabian peninsula. The Wahhabis preached purity of lifestyle and absolute obedience to the Koran, free from all compromise. The Portland Spectator portlandspectator.com

with the *dar al-harb*. They rejected the official schools of *fiqh*, including the Hanbali *madhhab* that had inspired their founder, and argued that whoever can read the Koran can judge for himself in matters of doctrine. After the death of the Companions, therefore, no new consensus (*ijma'*) could be admitted.

In the early twentieth century a group of Wahhabis gathered around a descendent of the original Ibn Sa'ud to form a brotherhood (*ikhwan*) dedicated to the re-establishment of a purified faith by *jihad*. Starting out with a handful of followers in 1902, Ibn Sa'ud, as the world now knows him, gradually drove the Turkish clients from their paper thrones in the Arabian peninsula. By the time that the Ottoman Empire collapsed, Ibn Sa'ud was able to declare a kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the peninsula, and for a brief while the *ikhwan* exerted their influence over the holy places, causing widespread alarm in the region. However Ibn Sa'ud, now a player on the stage of international politics, came to

see that he must negotiate with the British for the secure possession of his kingdom, and that the suppression of his following would be a necessary price.

Although the *ikhwan* were brought to heel, many of them through absorption into the Saudi National Guard, they did not forget their original intention, which was to engage in a *jihad* against the infidel. Nor did they forget that this aim had been diverted in the interests of a secular power. Instead of returning the sacred places to God, they had handed them over to an earthly sovereign, and one who had the impertinence, moreover, to name this holy territory for himself. It has never been forgotten by the puritan '*ulama'* of Saudi Arabia, therefore, that the spiritual legacy of Wahhabism has been betrayed by the family that purported to fight for it.

The other important Islamic movement in the formation of al-Qa'eda was also an *ikhwan*. The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in Egypt in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, then a twenty-two-year-old elementary school teacher in Ismailia, a featureless new town controlled by the Franco-British Suez Canal Company. Surrounded on all sides by the signs and symbols of the infidel way of life, living under a jurisdiction that had lost authority in Muslim eyes and which stood idly by as the Muslim way of life decayed, al-Banna, who had received a rigorous Islamic education and had already acquired a reputation for piety, responded to the appeals of his contemporaries to found a movement that would bring faith, hope, and charity to the rural migrants who were crowding into the shanty towns around the cities. For al-Banna, however, charity was an insufficient proof of faith: a *jihad* was also needed, which would expel the infidel from Muslim soil. Islamic clubs and discussion groups abounded in the Egypt of the time, but the Brotherhood was to be dif-

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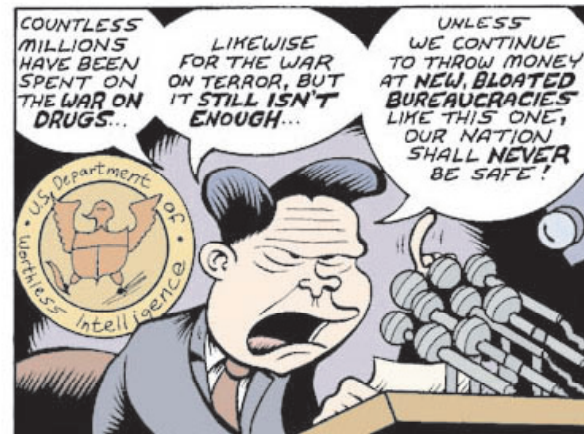
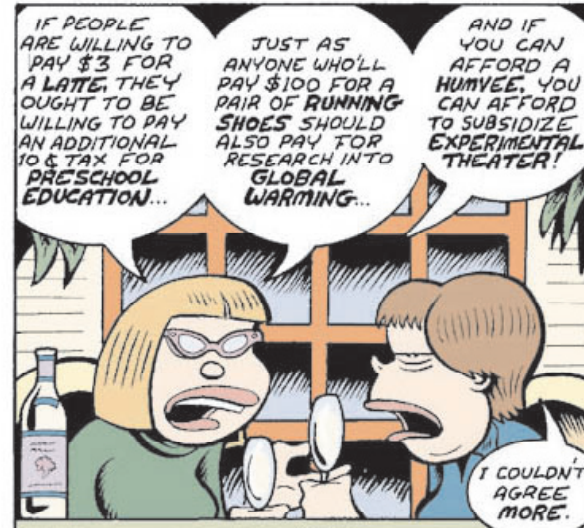




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ferent—a return to the militant Islam of the Prophet, the goal of which would be to re-establish the reign of purity and piety that the Prophet had created in Medina.

Hassan al-Banna was profoundly influenced by the Wahhabite movement. The conquest of the Holy Places was a triumphant proof of what could be achieved by faith, *‘asabiya*, and violence. Within a decade the Brotherhood had become the best organized indigenous political force in Egypt. Its anti-British sentiment caused it to look to the Axis powers in World War II, hoping for the liberation of Egypt and its own seizure of power thereafter. After the Allied victory, it confined itself to a campaign of terrorism, through which to “bear witness” to Islamic truth against the infidel.

This campaign was to provide the model for future Islamist movements in Iran and Lebanon. Cinemas were blown up, along with the haunts of the “infidels and heretics,” while women wearing “inadequate dress” were attacked with knives.

Prominent public figures were tried by the Brotherhood *in absentia* and found guilty of “causing corruption on earth”: their deaths followed as a matter of course. Two prime ministers and many other officials were murdered in this way. Young Muslims from elsewhere in the Middle East were recruited to the Brotherhood, which operated in secret, al-Banna denying all involvement in terrorism until his arrest and execution in 1949. By this time the Brotherhood had trained over a hundred terrorists from other Islamic countries, who traveled to their homelands to initiate the same kind of destabilizing mayhem that had brought chaos to Egypt. This unrest facilitated the army coup which led to the destruction of Egypt’s fragile monarchy and the assumption of power by Gamal Abdul-Nasir (or Nasser, as he is generally known in the West).

The Muslim Brotherhood was outlawed and savagely repressed by Nasser. But it lived on as a secret society, proliferating through cells formed to study the letters sent from prison by its new leading personality, Sayyed Qutb (1906–66), who had lived in the United States from 1949 until 1951, and who preached the impossibility of compromise between Islam and the world of ignorance (*jahiliyya*). Qutb was a selfconscious intellectual in the Western sense, who attempted to give Islam a decidedly modernist, even “existentialist” character. The faith of the true Muslim was, for Qutb, an expression of his innermost being against the inauthentic otherness of the surrounding world.<sup>17</sup> Islam was therefore the answer to the rootlessness and comfortlessness of modernity, and Qutb did not stop short of endorsing both suicide and terrorism as instruments in the self-affirmation of the believer against the *jahiliyya*. In place of the *credo quia absurdum* of Tertullian he preached the *facio quia absurdum* (I do it because it is absurd) of the existentialist, believing that this absurdity would also be a triumph of the spirit over the surrounding pagan culture.

Qutb and hundreds of his followers were executed by Nasser

in 1966, but not before their message had spread through a younger generation that was enjoying for the first time a Western-style university education and the excitement of global communications. Although Sadat and his successor, Hosni Mubarak, have tried to accommodate the Brotherhood by permitting it to reorganize as a political party, with a share in power accorded to its official leaders, the real movement continued independently, not as a form of politics, but as a form of *membership*, whose “brothers” would one day be martyrs.

Many of the ideological leaders of the Egyptian Islamist movement have been, like Mohammed Atta, graduates in technical or scientific subjects. Some have had the benefit of postgraduate study in the West. Their scientific training opens to them the secrets of Western technology while at the same time revealing the emptiness of a civilization in which only technology seems to matter. Although Osama bin Laden is a Saudi by birth, his most active followers are Egyptians, shaped by

Western technology and Qutbist Islamism to become weapons in the fight to the death against technology. Al-Qa’eda offers them a new way of life which is also a way of death—an Islamist equivalent of the “being-towards-death” extolled by Heidegger, in which all external loyalties are dissolved in an act of self-sacrificial commitment.

Al-Qa’eda appeals to North African Muslims partly because it is an Arabist organization, expressing itself in the language and imagery of the Koran and pursuing a conflict that has its roots in the land of the Prophet. It has given to the Sunni and Arab branch of Islamism the same sense of identity that the Shi’ite and Persian branch received from the Islamic Republic of Ayatollah Khomeini. Indeed, its vision is virtually indistinguishable from that of Khomeini, who once described the killing of Western corrupters as a “surgical operation” commanded by God himself.

Khomeini’s sentiments do not merely reflect his reading of the Koran. They are the fruit of a long exile in the West, where he was protected by the infidels whose destruction he conjures. They are a vivid testimony to the fact that the virtues of Western political systems are, to a certain kind of Islamic mind, imperceptible—or perceptible, as they were to Qutb and Atta, only as hideous moral failings. Even while enjoying the peace and freedom that issue from a secular rule of law, a person who regards the *shari’a* as the unique path to salvation may see these things only as the signs of a spiritual emptiness or corruption. For someone like Khomeini—a figure of great historic importance—human rights and secular government display the decadence of Western civilization, which has failed to arm itself against those who intend to destroy it. The message is that there can be no compromise, and systems that make compromise and conciliation into their ruling principles are merely aspects of the Devil’s work.

Islam originally spread through the world on the wings of

“Islam was therefore the answer to the rootlessness and comfortlessness of modernity,”

“Muslims, who believe on the authority of the Koran that suicide is categorically forbidden, have nevertheless been sucked into the shi’ite maelstrom.”

## ► Cover

military success. Conquest, victory, and triumph over enemies are a continual refrain of the Koran, offered as proof that God is on the side of the believers. The Shi'ites are remarkable among Muslims, however, in commemorating, as the central episode in their cult, a military defeat. To some extent they share the Christian vision of divinity as proved not through worldly triumph but through the willing acceptance of failure. Like Christians, Shi'ites take comfort in an eschatology of redemption, looking forward to the return of the Hidden Imam in the way that many Christians anticipate the Second Coming of Christ.

Hussein Ibn 'Ali, whom the Shi'ites recognize as their third Imam, was killed, together with his followers, by the armies of the Umayyad Caliph Yazid at the battle of Karbala in 680. Hussein was, for his followers, a symbol of all that is pure, innocent, and good in the Islamic way of life, and Yazid a proof that the community formed by the Prophet had fallen into the hands of corrupt and evil usurpers. By each year lamenting the defeat of Hussein, in rituals that may extend to excesses of self-inflicted injury, the Shi'ites rehearse their conviction that Islam must be constantly returned to its original purity, and that the powers that prevail in the world will always seek to corrupt it. At the same time Shi'ites internalize the goal of self-sacrificial death as the final proof of merit. This last feature became immensely important in the war against Iraq, which succeeded the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Following in the tradition of the assassins, Khomeini issued a new call to martyrdom, which was taken up by children and teenagers who expended their lives in clearing minefields.

The example set by the followers of Khomeini was soon projected around the world. Sunni Muslims, who believe on the authority of the Koran that suicide is categorically forbidden, have nevertheless been sucked into the Shi'ite maelstrom to become martyrs in the war against Satan. The cult of death seems to make sense of a world in which evil prevails; moreover it gives unprecedented power to the martyr, who no longer has anything to fear. The cult is both a protest against modern nihilism and a form of it—a last-ditch attempt to rescue Islam from the abyss of nothingness by showing that it can still demand the ultimate proof of devotion.

And the attempt seems to have succeeded. It is not too great an exaggeration to say that this new confluence of Sunni orthodoxy and Shi'ite extremism has laid the foundations for a worldwide Islamic revival. For the first time in centuries Islam appears, both in the eyes of its followers and in the eyes of the infidel, to be a single religious movement united around a single goal. Nor is it an exaggeration to suggest that one major factor in producing this unwonted unity is Western civilization and the process of globalization which it has set in motion. In the days when East was East and West was West it was possible for Muslims to devote their lives to pious observances and to ignore the evil that prevailed in the *dar al-harb*. But when that evil spreads around the globe, cheerfully offering freedoms and permissions in place of the austere requirements of a religious code, so that the *dar al-islam* is invaded by it, old antagonisms

are awakened. This is what the West now faces.

*Roger Scruton is an English philosopher who has published widely on an array of philosophical and cultural questions. This article is adapted from his most recent book, *The West and the Rest* (ISI Books, 2002) and appeared in *The Intercollegiate Review*, Fall 2002.*

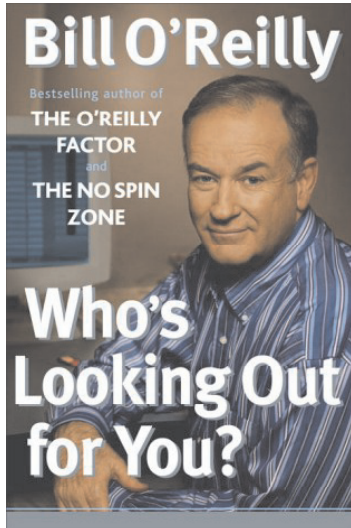
## “...this new confluence of Sunni orthodoxy and Shi'ite extremism has laid the foundations for a world- wide Islamic Revival.”

1. See, for example, the outstanding study by Malise Ruthven, *Islam in the World* (Harmondsworth, 1984, 2000); the review of modern Islamic politics by Edward Mortimer, *Faith and Power* (London, 1982); and the scholarly account by Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago, 1988). 2. The most accessible survey of the classical sources remains that of Erwin I. J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam: An Introductory Outline* (Cambridge, 1958). 3. Quoted in Rosenthal, 131. 4. *Ibid.*, 155. 5. See, for example, Nabil Saleh, *Unlawful Gain and Legitimate Profit in Islamic Law: Riba, gharar and Islamic Banking* (Cambridge, 1986). 6. Ruthven, *op. cit.*, 99. 7. See the summary in Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, 94-102. 8. Ruthven, *op. cit.*, 178. 9. *Ibid.* 10. G. von Grunebaum, quoted in Ruthven, 178; *mal* means horde or store, and the *mal* Allah is the traditional name for the public purse. 11. See Antoine Fattal, *Le Statut légal des non-Musulmans en pays d'Islam* (Beirut: Impr. Catholique, 1958). 12. See Michael Mehaffy and Nikos Salingaros, “The End of the Modern World,” [www.openDemocracy.net](http://www.openDemocracy.net) for January 2002. Aleppo, whose Arabic name, Halab, means “milk,” is still one of the most vital and best preserved of Middle Eastern cities—although the city sustained considerable damage during Hafiz el-Asad's exterminatory attack on the indigenous cadre of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1982. 13. On the rituals and the prayers of orthodox Sunni Islam, see Maurice Gaudiefroy-Demombeynes's classic account in *Muslim Institutions*, tr. John P. MacGregor (London, 1950). 14. Since law derives from God and not the ruler, there is in any case a complex problem, for the Muslim, posed by enforcement. See Michael Cook's exemplary work of scholarship, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge 2001). 15. See the thorough account by Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War Inc: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden* (London, 2001). 16. See Daniel Pipes, “Islam and Islamism: Faith and Ideology,” *The National Interest* No. 59, Spring 2000. 17. See Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies* (Chicago, 1988).

# BOOKS & ARTS

## Book Review: Who's Looking Out For You?

Reviewed By Mateusz Perkowski



Initially, Bill O'Reilly's new book may give the disconcerting impression that the notoriously prickly pundit has turned into a softie. In the introduction, the author blatantly butters up his readers. "If you have started this book, the chances are you're an independent type," he writes. "The everyday American who understands what The Factor concept is all about is generally a person who wants to live life honestly and make his or her own way. That person is often responsible, generous, aware that others around them also have lives to live, and unabashedly patriotic. You, very likely, are one of those people."

After this prudish flattery, O'Reilly boasts about the incredibly high ratings of his show. The sheer momentum of its popularity overcame the elite media "eggheads" who were plotting the program's demise – "The American people had made the O'Reilly Factor a powerful entity," the author writes, and then brags about the acclaim he has received from the American Television Critics Association and Industry Magazine Television Week.

After fawning over himself and his minions of fans, O'Reilly decides to enlighten the masses with pieces of wis-

dom gathered during the course of his life. Some are remarkably perceptive. A great many, however, are profoundly redundant: "You must learn to become a problem solver, not a problem creator." Worn out pieces of advice – such as the importance of "defining your life, and not letting others define it for you" – may lead the reader to think the book is just another run-of-the-mill self-help guide with a political twist. Luckily, O'Reilly's pointed wit outshines the book's numerous clichés.

And don't worry – you won't find *Who's Looking Out For You?* in the 'personal growth' section of the book store. Even the most tired platitudes are interpreted with an original, level-headed abrasiveness that only O'Reilly can provide. Unlike the legions of 'psychobabble' gurus, O'Reilly admits that it is impossible to entirely clear your life of problems. Especially if they are serious. "If you're going to drink a quart of bourbon a day or smoke crack, this book is not going to help you," writes O'Reilly.

Even those of us who aren't drug addicts are also faced with constant hurdles. However, the author doesn't think we must hide from these difficulties. They are to be expected.

"Problems are the reason humans are at the top of the food chain...Our ancestors, the primates, lived a marginal existence until a giant animal ate them. Then we evolved and learned to stick a fiery torch in the giant animal's face." The problems confronting the human species are currently much more complex than killing predatory animals, but the basic logic remains the same: we must use our intellect to ensure survival. Rationality must allow us to understand the forces working in our favor, as well as the forces working against us – this is the guiding principle in *Who's Looking Out For You?* The ultimate skill, O'Reilly says, is "the ability to determine who

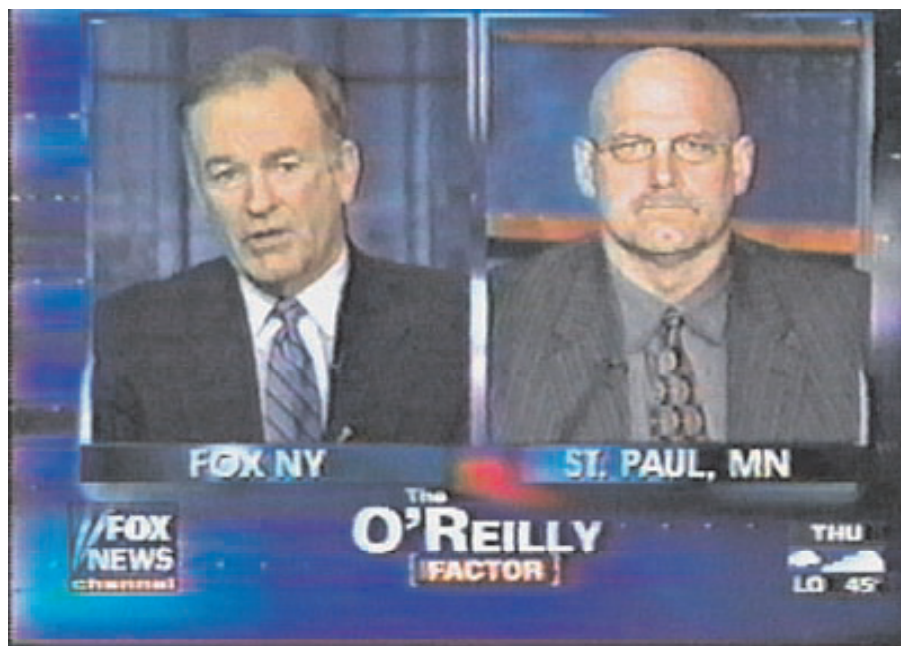
cares about you as a person and who doesn't."

The book includes anecdotes of the author's own achievements and humiliations, both as working-class kid, an investigative reporter, and a news anchorman. While the title of the book may be *Who's Looking Out For You?*, the author concentrates mostly on whom you cannot trust. (Just about everybody.) O'Reilly mentions some of his own private betrayals, but is discreet enough not to "name names," as he usually does about public figures.

In the most personally revealing portion of the book, however, he goes into detail about the unstable relationship he had with his father: an accountant who despised his dreary dead-end career, but kept the position of out of insecurity. He often took his frustrations out upon his son both physically and mentally; the two men had a very tense relationship. Upon his deathbed, the elder O'Reilly lamented the unfulfilled potential of his life. Instead of vilifying his father in *Who's Looking Out For You*, the author says he learned from the man's regrets. Unlike his father, Bill O'Reilly pursued his goals fearlessly, and, as he admits, somewhat brashly.

O'Reilly also concedes that his achievements as a journalist and broadcaster were not founded only upon his talent and mental agility, but on his capacity to find worthwhile companions. The author offers advice on how to earn and retain valuable friends, how to avoid "weasels," and even offers a few tidbits of advice about romantic relationships. The new book generally has a more personal tone than the *The No Spin Zone* or *The O'Reilly Factor*, and it is clear that the author wanted to create something different from his previous works. Essentially, though, *Who's Looking Out For You?* is a continuation of O'Reilly's ongoing analysis of the American politi-





cal and social system.

This isn't a bad thing. Whether it is on the radio, on television, or in print, Bill O'Reilly is always doing the same thing: cutting through the layers of political correctness and media hyperbole in order to get a glimpse of reality. His scrutiny is often unrefined and conservatively slanted, but the man honestly wants to get to the bottom of things. Unlike many other broadcasters, O'Reilly is more than just a mouthpiece for the Republican party. Many accuse him of being an unsophisticated boor – but this lack of nuance doesn't mean he is devoid of insight. "Occasionally the Irish do know what they're talking about," writes O'Reilly, poking fun at himself. "Just don't get them at closing time."

As we have come to expect, O'Reilly is generous with biting commentary about the government, the media, and all the other 'usual suspects.' Though he deals with problems both great and small, his writing isn't choppy – the author seamlessly segues from the troubles of individual people to the burdens of the country as a whole. More often than not, the two are interrelated; as in the case of the sycophantic government and the decadent consumerism of American

culture.

According to O'Reilly, the government creates the illusion of 'looking out for you' through social programs. But this superficial compassion amounts to little more than throwing money at stagnant bureaucracies. According to O'Reilly, the system is no longer working effectively; "our federal government is not good at helping real people who have real problems, and it doesn't care about the money you give it, as long as that revenue train keeps chugging along."

The gradual creation of a powerful government opposes the basic philosophy of the United States, which ensures freedom from overly central control. According to the author, "corruption, incompetence and political correctness have spread like the Ebola virus throughout our federal system." The government 'for the people, by the people' has become a bureaucracy designed to pander to the interests of lobbyists and campaign contributors. This image of government-for-sale has a subversive effect on traditionally American concepts like self-reliance and independence. O'Reilly recalls the old American spirit, which Theodore Roosevelt embodied in a single sentence: "Pray not for lighter burdens, but for stronger backs." Unfortunately, this spir-

it is gradually eroding; in O'Reilly's view, the underlying problem in the United States is an obsession with consumption and gratification – "an intense quest for self-satisfaction."

As if scolding the American public weren't enough, the author acknowledges President George W. Bush is a "child of privilege" who "brings a sense of entitlement to his job." Unless it involves his fans, O'Reilly is obviously terrible at kissing butt. The criticism is spread all around. Aside from the obvious targets, such as President Clinton and dishonest corporate executives, the author also reproves such conservative-friendly characters as John Ashcroft and Pope John Paul II for their failures in leadership. His blunt words may not land him any invitations to White House dinners, but Bill O'Reilly's observations are rarely off-mark.

The author's characteristically self-conscious arrogance pervades *Whose Looking Out For You?* This may put off many people, but it will probably charm just as many. Bill O'Reilly hasn't made a name for himself for being humble, but he does not presume to be omniscient. "Sometimes I'm wrong," he writes, "Sometimes, I even admit it." The book isn't a piece of timeless literature, not does it purport to be – nonetheless, the personable common sense offered in its pages is well-written and presented in an entertaining context. *Whose Looking Out For You?* may never define American culture or steer the future of foreign policy, but it does one thing remarkably well: it manages to combine easy readability with honest, intellectual analysis.



# Howard Dean for America! or else!



*“His message is that Bush  
is out of control.”*

